

The Combination of Social Structure Theory and the Writing of Chinese Art History: Li Puyuan's "Introduction to Chinese Art History" Writing Paradigm Research

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Abstract: Li Puyuan's "Introduction to Chinese Art History" is China's first work on art history with historical materialism as the theoretical framework. The study found that it actually accepted Plekhanov's dialectical interpretation of historical materialism, especially Plekhanov's "five-factor formula" theory of social structure. In the historical stage, he put forward the concept of "mixed society" according to the evolution of social production mode; in terms of writing style, he incorporated multi-dimensional factors such as productivity, economic foundation, political system, social psychology and ideology into the analytical framework to form a progressive discourse structure. In terms of research methods, he achieved a methodological breakthrough from 'economic foundation' to social psychology, and deduced the artistic form with social psychology as the intermediary when archaeological evidence was missing. Therefore, he pioneered the combination of historical materialism and Chinese art history, and provided an important methodological reference for the study of art history in later generations.

Keywords: Li Puyuan; social structure theory; plekhanov; the study of Chinese art history

1. Introduction

Li Puyuan's "Introduction to Chinese Art History" is regarded as China's first attempt to study art history with historical materialism. Lin Wenzheng commented: 'Mr. Li Puyuan now uses a quick knife to cut out the mess, resolutely breaks away from the Chen style of the predecessors, and adopts the historical materialism as the principle of his history, and refers to the cultural dissemination theory as the vice rule, this is how bold, how joyful, how revolutionary attitude ! '[1] However, most scholars only pointed out that Li Puyuan used historical materialism to write art history, but did not distinguish and grasp what kind of historical materialism he was influenced by, and how to absorb and construct his unique art history writing path and methodology? Plekhanov's dialectical interpretation of historical materialism provides a key theoretical breakthrough path for Li Puyuan under the theoretical background of 'everyone is different' and the prevalence of mechanism. Plekhanov inherited and developed Marxism, and constructed a dialectical materialist conception of history emphasizing the multi-layer interaction of social structure with the "five-factor formula", which transcended the mechanical "economic determinism". Li Puyuan, who is at the center of this theoretical communication, has deeply contacted and absorbed Plekhanov's theory by virtue of his communication with the left-wing literary and artistic circles, the inspiration of Zhu Qianzhi's historical view method, and the convenience of his position in Hangzhou National College of Art, which has laid a solid foundation for him to form a unique art research method in the "Introduction to Chinese Art History". In 1941, Li Puyuan explicitly introduced Plekhanov's "five-factor formula theory" in "On the production formula of literature and art". This shows that he adopted Plekhanov's social structure theory. To explore art from the perspective of social psychology and cultural thought.

2. The introduction of the 'five-factor formula'

In 1941, Plekhanov's "five-factor formula theory" was introduced in his article "On the production formula of literature and art" published in "cultural introduction". The article specifically discusses: 'Literature and art production, there will be a certain formula? Artists of the so-called historical materialism say: 'Yes ! Answer by George Plekhanov: 1. The condition of the forces of production; 2. Economic relations based on such forces; 3. On the basis of the given economy, the social and political system is constructed; 4. The human psychology of the society, which is determined partly directly by the economy and partly by the political system of the society in which it is built; 5. Various ideologies reflecting this psychology.' [2] These five levels can be summarized as: productivity-economic base-politics, law-social class psychology (low-level social psychology and high-level social psychology) -ideology. Specifically, productivity determines production relations (economic base), and politics, law and social psychology act as intermediaries, indirectly affecting the superstructure. Therefore, the economic base's control over art is not direct. As Plekhanov pointed out, although art originates from labor practice

and is restricted by productivity, in a specific historical period, the influence of superstructure factors such as religion and philosophy on art may be more direct.

Li Puyuan's acceptance of this theory is no accident. First of all, as a famous playwright, he has had relevant contacts with Tian Han, a left-wing playwright of the left-wing drama club Nanguo Society, and left-wing playwrights Cao Yu and Guo Moruo. [3] Therefore, Li Puyuan was influenced by the left-wing literary and artistic trend of thought, which exposed him to Marxism and historical materialism. Secondly, some studies have shown that although Zhu Qianzhi, who is familiar with him, is not satisfied with the 'economic determinism' of mechanical historical materialism, but in the later stage of his research, he advocates combining the historical materialism of economic theory with the social historical view to establish a more acceptable historical research method. [1] In his preface, Li Puyuan especially thanked Zhu Qianzhi for his revision of the manuscript. Combined with Zhu's later proposition of combining economic theory with social history view, Li Puyuan was very likely to be inspired by it, thus forming a research vision beyond the simple "economic determinism". Finally, in the 1920s, with the outbreak of revolutionary culture, Plekhanov's related works were introduced into China by a large number of translations. [4] At that time, Li Puyuan was the secretary of the president's office and the president of the book publishing class of Hangzhou National Arts College. He should be the first to come into contact with Plekhanov's various translation books, and should also have known this kind of historical materialism that goes deep into the multi-dimensional structure of society and combines sociological methodology, so as to abandon the historical materialism of 'economic determinism'.

Looking at Li Puyuan's artistic interpretation logic, the influence of Plekhanov's "five-factor formula" is concentrated on two levels: first, to break the shackles of "economic determinism", to explore the complex relationship between Chinese art and the elements of Chinese social structure, and to avoid simplifying art as a direct reflection of economy; secondly, pay attention to the intermediary role of social psychology, explore the formation and evolution of Chinese art from the perspective of general social psychology and cultural thought, so as to avoid the historical stereotype of 'economic history view' criticized by the historians at that time. This theoretical logic has been seen in the writing of 'An Introduction to Chinese Art History'. The following will analyze how the book practices this multi-dimensional interactive historical materialism in historical staging and writing style.

3. Theoretical practice of multi-dimensional interaction in art history staging and writing style

Li Puyuan fully practiced the multi-dimensional interactive logic contained in the five-factor formula in the path of history. In "An Introduction to Chinese Art History", he analyzed the historical stages of Chinese society based on the evolution of social production methods, and created the concept of "mixed society". It is worth noting that the book systematically penetrates the influence of the five-factor formula in the writing style: the book consists of eleven chapters, each of which is discussed according to the four-layer structure of 'social nature-material life-cultural life-art form'. This style arrangement is to transform the five-factor chain of "productivity-economic foundation-political system-social psychology-ideology" emphasized by Plekhanov into a specific writing framework. Taking the fourth chapter 'initial mixed society' as an example, this paper analyzes how this multi-dimensional interactive logic is implemented in writing practice.

In the chapter of "early mixed society", Li Puyuan's discussion strictly follows the four-layer progressive structure. The first section is 'social nature judgment'. According to the general situation of production relations and cultural thoughts from the Han Dynasty to the early Yuan Dynasty, he defined this stage as the "mixed" state of the three social forms of feudal system, patriarchal system and individual system. This judgment is not arbitrary, but based on the overall grasp of the development of productive forces. In his view, from the early Han Dynasty to the middle of the Qing Dynasty, the productive forces were in a relatively stagnant state for a long time, resulting in the static relationship between production and social relations, and the three social forms were intertwined. As the starting point of the five-factor chain, productivity has become the fundamental basis for historical staging. The second section is the analysis of 'material life', which corresponds to the productivity and economic foundation level in the five factors. Li Puyuan pointed out that with the improvement of rural production technology, handicraft industry and individual business level, on the one hand, the rulers inherited the tradition of emphasizing agriculture and restraining commerce, on the other hand, they implemented various state-owned businesses. In the chapter of "initial mixed society", Li Puyuan discusses the four-layer progressive structure as the framework. Starting from productivity, through economic foundation, political system and social psychology, he finally reaches the art form, clearly presenting the progressive relationship of "productivity-economic foundation-social psychology-ideology" in the five-factor formula. Among them, the second section 'material life' analysis corresponds to the level of productivity and economic foundation in the five factors, which lays a material foundation for the subsequent analysis of cultural thoughts.

The third section focuses on the analysis of 'cultural life', which corresponds to the level of social psychology and ideology. Li Puyuan deeply discussed the three thoughts of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism formed by the economic and political system at that time. He believed that due to the continuous development of social handicraft industry and commerce, coupled with the open and inclusive academic atmosphere since the Qin and Han Dynasties, the Taoist thought of attaching importance to self-personality was born. However, under the traditional policy of emphasizing agriculture and restraining commerce, the thought of respecting Confucius and Confucianism has always occupied the mainstream. At the same time, Buddhist thought was absorbed and transformed by scholar-bureaucrats and became a tool for explaining Confucianism. The coexistence of the three thoughts together constitutes the social psychological situation of this period.

The fourth section is the analysis of 'art form', which specifically examines how the above-mentioned cultural thoughts promote or hinder the development of art. On the one hand, cultural thought can promote the development of art. In the Sui and Tang Dynasties, the Li Tang Dynasty revered the Taoist ancestor Li Er because of the patriarchal genealogy psychology, and established a large number of Taoist 'Yin temples' throughout the country. These temples often integrate the traditional motifs of Buddhism and Confucianism in shaping the artistic image of immortals and spirits, which undoubtedly indirectly promotes the prosperity of Chinese art. On the other hand, cultural thought may also hinder the development of art. The Five Dynasties and the Song Dynasty are often recognized by the academic community as the decline period of Chinese architecture. Li Puyuan puts forward a speculative explanation: 'The Five Dynasties and the Song Dynasty are the most developed era of Buddhism and Zen in China. The pagodas and statues are declining compared with the Wei and Jin Dynasties, or is it one of the reasons for the decline of Chinese architecture?' [1] He cited the cases of Baoshu Pagoda and Leifeng Pagoda in Hangzhou, indicating that although Zen flourished in the Wuyue period of the Five Dynasties, the pagoda also retained the basic shapes of the Tang Dynasty, such as "shell type" and "nine-level pagoda", but the overall trend was decadent. Li Puyuan believes that it is precisely because of the prosperity of Zen that indirectly affects the overall trend of architectural development by affecting the artistic form of temple tower statues.

4. The role of social psychology in the construction of Chinese architectural form

As mentioned above, Li Puyuan fully implemented Plekhanov's "five-factor formula" in historical staging and compilation style, and incorporated multi-dimensional elements such as productivity, economic foundation, political system, social psychology and ideology into the analytical framework. However, the significance of the five-factor formula is not only to provide a multi-dimensional interactive writing style, but also to reveal the key role of social psychology as an 'intermediary link', which is the theoretical foundation of Li Puyuan's realization of specific research methods. If the focus of the previous article is to present how Li Puyuan 'constructs' a multi-dimensional interactive analysis framework, then this section will further explore how he uses the intermediary category of 'social psychology' to realize the scientific deduction of the integration of Buddhist pagoda buildings and Chinese traditional buildings in the dilemma of lack of archaeological evidence.

Art is a high-level social psychological phenomenon. It is not directly dominated by the economic base, but indirectly interacts with the economic base through the intermediate link of social psychology. This principle was applied by Li Puyuan to 'Introduction to Chinese Art History'. He deduced the architectural psychology of Chinese architecture in the era of Emperor Hanming from the aspects of geographical environment, political system and cultural thought. Based on this, he responded to the controversial question of whether Buddhism had a large impact on the shape and structure of Chinese architecture in the period of Emperor Hanming. Li Puyuan believes that in the absence of archaeological objects, the White Horse Temple and the Wuliang stone carvings can indeed be used as a kind of image and literature evidence to prove that Chinese architecture has been influenced by Buddhist culture since the Han Ming Emperor period. However, it cannot be concluded that the White Horse Temple in the Eastern Han Dynasty was built in accordance with the shape of the Indian Buddhist pagoda, nor can it be determined that Chinese architecture before the Wei and Jin Dynasties has been fully integrated with the style of Buddhist architecture.

Therefore, by analyzing China's geographical environment, political thought and cultural emotion, he draws a general picture of Chinese social psychology, and combines it with the construction psychology of Chinese architecture, compares the differences between Chinese architectural psychology and Indian Buddhist architectural psychology and the reasons for their composition, so as to demonstrate that the Buddhist pagoda and temple style was integrated with Chinese architectural form on a large scale in the Wei and Jin Dynasties. Li Puyuan believes that 'one of the psychology of Chinese architecture, the general skills of Chinese inherent architecture, the first feeling given to us, is the meaning of stability'. [1] The social psychology of "stable and stable" is jointly created by China's geographical environment, political system, cultural thought and economic situation. First, at the geographical level, the vast plain environment and agricultural production mode have developed the Chinese people's pursuit of "little change" concept of stability, so that Chinese architecture adopts a stable

square shape in construction. Secondly, at the political and political ideological level, the political system of the monarchy organized by social relations has created a flat cube below the roof of Chinese architecture, while the political thought of putting people first has formed a more stable and dreary architectural appearance and a lively and frivolous style of Dougong, which represents the emperor's intelligent and joyful people. Thirdly, at the cultural and emotional level, he believes that the decoration of Chinese architecture is the materialized expression of Taoist culture. However, due to the public emotion, that is, the so-called 'individualism', presents a complex and changeable appearance in the historical process, and each era has the characteristics of each era. Therefore, the decoration of Chinese architecture presents a complex and diverse style in detail. Finally, he returned to the overall economic level, believing that the lack of capitalist economy in ancient China tried to compress the living space of individualism, resulting in the lack of independent and upward style identification advocated by individualism in Chinese architecture, so it formed a stable architectural art style that developed to the ground rather than to the air.

On the contrary, Buddhist architecture produces a strong sense of uplift through the large and small towers and dense eaves. The tower brake at the top is also different from the stable and graceful outline of Chinese architecture, thus forming an architectural form that is separated from the ground and stands vertically. This is obviously different from the sense of stability and broad-mindedness given by traditional Chinese architecture. Li Puyuan believes that the vertical linear shape of Buddhist pagodas originates from the architectural psychology of Buddhist pagodas. Buddhism advocates that pagodas are a materialized expression of detachment from the consciousness of all things, and human consciousness is connected to heaven and earth through the towering pagodas. However, the social psychology of seeking stability shaped by objective conditions such as geography, politics and culture shapes a stable and stable Chinese architectural psychology, which is different from the shape of Buddhist architecture. It was not until the Wei, Jin and Six Dynasties that the germination and prevalence of the study of Huang and Lao broke away from the traditional social and psychological constraints of seeking stability. Chinese architecture gradually changed, and it was more integrated with the shape of the temple tower, forming a vertical architectural style, such as pavilions, Huabiao, Wangzhu and so on. Therefore, Li Puyuan concluded that in addition to the White Horse Temple, it was impossible to directly conclude that Buddhism had deeply influenced the shape of Chinese architecture during the Eastern Han Dynasty and the Ming Dynasty. Under the lifting of the ban on the study of Huang Lao, the idea of individualism was liberated from the idea of monarchy, and the independent rising temple tower and the Chinese architecture seeking stability and harmony were finally gradually integrated during the Wei, Jin and Six Dynasties.

Li Puyuan's argumentation logic clearly presents the methodological value of the 'social psychology' link in the five-factor formula: in the absence of archaeological evidence, he did not stop at the decisive role of the economic foundation, but through the intermediary link of social psychology, he integrated the multi-dimensional factors such as geographical environment, production mode and political system into an operable analysis path, so as to realize the scientific deduction of art form.

5. Conclusion

Li Puyuan's "Introduction to Chinese Art History" is recognized as the first Chinese art history research work written by historical materialism. It confirms the essence of the social and historical process of Chinese art history, from the field of concept and spirit to the field of reality and the field of material production and life. And further use of social structure theory, dialectically examine the interaction between art and social multi-dimensional structure, so as to more accurately and objectively grasp the general characteristics and laws of art.

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